



“Bridges of White and Blue”

A Celebration of Western Pennsylvania’s Greek-American roots in the Greek Revolution of 1821

March 2021 marks a milestone in the history of Greece and its Diaspora. Together, we will celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the beginning of the Greek Struggle for Independence.

Every town and village in Greece, small or large, is known to have participated in some fashion, on land and sea, in the Liberation in the years immediately preceding the Revolutionary period as well as during the decade-long struggle, that resulted in the founding of the Greek nation. Many individuals and families offered sacrifices of every kind – including their lives – to win their freedom. These “unknown” heroes are only now beginning to be discovered.

With the objective of unearthing the undiscovered facets of the Greek Revolution, leveraging a synergy between organizations in Greece and our region, we have begun a unique and novel legacy project that informs our region’s contribution to the “Greece 2021” Initiative as part of our celebration of the 200th Anniversary milestone.

The first handful of immigrants who settled in Western Pennsylvania as early as 1850 eventually grew to a large and diverse community that, at its peak, is estimated to have consisted of approximately 37,000 individuals. Today, descendants of these pioneers can count at least one ancestor, if not more, from areas in Greece where the Revolution was launched and from where it progressed and grew. **We have discovered descendants of “unknown” heroes of the Greek Revolution who immigrated to the greater Western PA region, eventually planting the seeds of what, today, constitutes a Greek base of radiant colors on the regional immigrant American canvas.**

This legacy project is slated to be completed in time for March 2021. It will be the basis of a historic celebration of those ancestors, their descendants and their families here in Western Pennsylvania.

The celebration will unveil a historic exhibit (that will travel to Greece, especially to those towns and villages) as well as an audiovisual memorial to be on permanent display, freely accessible by the public, as an attestation to the Greek struggle for independence. As a reminder and challenge to future generations of Americans to embrace the universalizing ideals of Hellenism in making America a more perfect country.

We have begun collecting data from public and private resources here and in Greece (e.g. at the University of Pittsburgh, and in the records of the “League of the Descendants of the Revolutionary Families of 1821 and Historic Families of Greece”) assisted by our colleagues at the European Art Center of Greece. However, in order to obtain and present as complete a record as possible, we are asking all individuals in Western Pennsylvania who can claim Greek ancestry to send us as much information as feasible in terms of the following:

- Surnames, names, and any “nicknames” of your Greek-origin grandparents, great-grandparents, and village/town/city/region of origin in Greece;
- Year in which grandparents, great-grandparents left Greece and/or arrived to the USA (and port of entry if known);
- Any information (anecdotal or documented) or stories that you remember, passed down from your parents/grand-parents, that link your ancestors to facets of the Greek Revolution;
- A picture of your grandparents and/or great-grandparents (scanned at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi).

Please submit the information requested above and picture(s) to the American Hellenic Foundation of Western Pennsylvania (contact@pahellenicfoundation.org) with your contact details (name, email, telephone #) no later than the 30th of October, 2020.

“Through our ancestors, their lives and dreams, all of us have – inside of us – a part of the Struggle for Greek Independence, 200 Years ago”

“A celebration of our common roots, to remember where we started from, to realize where we stand, and to decide where we want to go”

A project by:

The Greek Room Committee of the Nationality Rooms Program at the University of Pittsburgh,
The American Hellenic Foundation of Western Pennsylvania
&
The European Art Center of Greece (Peania, Attica, Greece)